

June/July 1985

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IMAGES

Kootenay Women's Paper



Photo by Jacqueline Cameron

Inside: Report from Mozambique,
Welfare mothers, Feminist Manifesto,
Summer Arts Festival...and more!

Collectivial

Abortion politics continue to have a high profile in Nelson, with city council having voted by a four-to-three vote to proclaim May 5-12 "Protect Human Life Week" at the request of the local anti-abortion group, Nelson Future Life.

At the first public council meeting following that week, West Kootenay Women's Association members Tish Lakes and Carol Beauchamp made a presentation pointing out that although the proclamation called for protection for the handicapped and elderly as well as the "helpless unborn", the most prominent activities of the week, (ending on Mother's Day with a vigil outside the hospital for 94 aborted fetuses) focused on stopping abortion, and therefore stopping women's abilities to make reproductive choices.

This proclamation was made by council without any public notice on the vote, and Ross Lake, Bill Ramsden and John Neville voted against making the proclamation, saying the issue was too controversial for what are usually inoffensive civic endorsements.

The proclamation vote was moved by Charon Heflin and was carried by three council members personally opposed to abortion, Mayor Louis Maglio, Stan Grill and Heflin, and one member, Peter Dodge, who said he is pro-choice but that he felt the other side had a right to be heard. In the WKWA presentation, the difference between freedom of speech and civic endorsement of a minority view on an extremely controversial issue was pointed out, but council members Dodge and Heflin were the only ones to ask questions and did not appear to agree that it was wrong for council to endorse an anti-abortion position without public debate.

This incident followed the showing of "The Silent Scream" on cable television and the subsequent showing of "Abortion: Stories from North and South" by the WKWA. Both incidents demonstrate a major problem facing pro-choice advocates: why are we having so much trouble making it clear that the absolute anti-choice stand is a minority position, which it is, and why aren't more people who are genuinely pro-choice, even if they don't like abortion, speaking up to protect a woman's right to choose?

Unless IMAGES becomes a Sacred megaproject, it looks like it's time again to hold our somewhat annual 1985 IMAGES benefit and general good time. Everyone is invited. The date: June 22; the place: the Vallican Whole Community Centre. Our technological revolution has cost somewhat more than we anticipated, a fact that others using high tech are discovering, too. In addition to the IMAGES Ad Hoc Singers, entertainment will (tentatively) be provided by the Euphonious Feminist Non-Performing Quintet, with an auction of wonderful and exotic things, and a dance to end up the evening. So plan to attend and bring all your friends.

The Salmo Women's Resource Centre has opened - a new women's centre for the Kootenays. The centre, located in the Legion at the Selkirk Learning Centre, will hold drop-in hours from 7-9 p.m. Tuesdays, and 12-3:30 p.m. Wednesdays. The centre's phone number is 357-2017, the address is Box 999, Salmo, VOG 1Z0.

Another major Kootenay event holds fun and festivities, if our cover photo is any indication of the Kootenay Lake Summer School of the Arts and Multicultural Festival feeling. (See story p. 5).

And last but not least, IMAGES adds its congratulations to Nelson feminist writer Paulette Jiles for receiving two major awards for her book, *Celestial Navigation*. Both the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and the Gerald Lamper Memorial Award include a \$1,000 cash prize from the Canadian League of Poets. In addition, the Department of External Affairs is finally doing something right and is flying Jiles to Cambridge, England where she will read her Jesse James poems. She has also just been nominated for the Governor General's Award for poetry. Jiles is a founder of the Kootenay School of Writing, and recently taught a session on women's role in the novel at the Kootenay Women and Words conference in Creston.

Collective members for this issue are: Bonnie Baker, Joy Green, Sally Mackenzie, Rita Moir, Lois Path and Sam Simpson. Contributors are: Sue Anderson, Carol Beauchamp, Gillian Browning, Ann Swanson Gross, Wendy Hurst, Jan, Nicole Kay, Tish Lakes, Maureen Mitchell and Marg Tessman.

IMAGES is published by a collective of women at 307 Vernon Street in Nelson, B.C. All articles are the responsibility of the Collective. We meet Thursdays from 7-10 p.m. Send your articles, short stories, graphics, photos (black and white only), letters, and poetry to Box 736, Nelson, B.C. V1L 5R4.

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White wows 'em in Nelson

By Bonnie Baker

On the snowy, miserable evening of March 24th, Nancy White, Canada's civil service songwriter, came to the Nelson Civic Theatre and raised the spirits of all 368 members of the West Kootenay audience.

White, dressed as a parody of a French chanteuse - "I always like to do a little something French in my show." - (leaving some of us wondering how funny this would be in Quebec), produced roars of laughter when she sang, in French torchsong style, about "dustballs," and how they stubbornly refused to stay away, while her able accompanist, Rick Whitelaw, very seriously translated for "les Anglais." Her more serious songs about the struggles in Latin America contrasted with her wicked and hilarious satire of the politics in Canada.

Not content to attack the Liberals and the Tories, the Senate (You Don't have to Work No More), the royal family (Always a Princess, Never a Queen), Ronald Reagan and the Pope, White also satirized the left with her rendition of What Should I Wear to the Revolution.

While laughing my head off at most of White's incredibly clever wit and impeccable timing, there were moments when doubt crept in about some of the targets of her attacks. White's song about PMS, perhaps funny among women, seems to confirm the myth that women become monsters for six days a month, and then satirizes this condition. Her assumption here is questionable at best. And her hilarious parody about the frozen embryos saved in Australia because the sperm and egg were "from money," calls the embryos "babies" throughout the song. Semantics?

And despite the fact that White sang a couple of songs about British Columbia, none of them were more recent than two years old, which in the world of political satire is very old indeed. I would have thought that the Sacred government's policies would have been grist for her mill, and that she could have whipped off a new and biting bit of wit for B.C. on her way out here from the hub. Perhaps her Kootenay trip will be an inspiration.

The Nelson concert was produced by Jeanette Grittani, who also opened the show with some of her own and other's songs and finished with a wonderful one, I Love to Laugh, which had the house in stitches when Nancy White came on.

One of the best attractions of the evening was the audience. People came from all over despite the weather - from Trail, Nelson, Pass Creek, Castlegar, Balfour, Slokan Valley, probably from Salmo, maybe from Spokane, and one woman from Mozambique! The intermission was good and long so old friends had time to meet and mingle again after winter's isolation.

So in spite of some occasional frowns among the gales of otherwise unrestrained laughter, the Nancy White concert gave the West Kootenays a well needed, pre-spring lift.



Photo by Tish Lakes

Feminists have to eat too!

Doorway to Creative Cuisine by Nila Hoolaeff
Doorway to Creative Cuisine Publishing, 1984
R.R. 1, S.25, C.1, Castlegar, B.C. V1N 3H7
140 pages, \$9.95

Review by S. Simpson

An authentic Kootenay cookbook, *Doorway to Creative Cuisine*, has Doukhobor, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, Greek, Chinese and East Indian food sections. Since it is written by Nila Hoolaeff of Castlegar, I was tempted to try the Doukhobor section first. Successfully guided by the clear instructions I prepared a plateful of potato-cheese vareniki in record time. They were as good as any that I've had at Winnipeg Ukrainian weddings or a decade of Slokan Valley living.

There's an excellent section on vegetable dishes that makes me wish it was garden harvesting time. Having just recently received the book, Indonesian spareribs and Kartoshnik (potato cake) are two of the next recipes I'm planning on enjoying.

Although some prepared ingredients are used, this book mostly calls for commonly available, whole foods. Several pages of full colour photographs illustrate many of the recipes. These pictures help in the preparation of unfamiliar dishes as well as encouraging you to hurry while cooking. The book is spiral bound to lie flat, has large print, and no recipes are continued on another page - a sure winner with sticky fingered cooks.

In the tradition of cookbooks, homey maxims are also offered. "The modern wife is one who knows what her husband's favorite dishes are - and the restaurants that serve them." "The belly will not listen to advice." "Anything that is greatly admired is bound to be much maligned as well. Chocolate is no exception."

Another member of the IMAGES Collective will testify to the excellence of the section entitled "Cordially Yours." The recipe for Bailey's Irish Cream invited holiday experimentation with variations on this delectable drink.

After three batches, it was difficult to remember which variety excelled, but there remains a determination to try again.

ANNOUNCING...!

IMAGES BENEFIT CONCERT & DANCE

Saturday, June 22

7:30 p.m

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Local NDP waffles on affirmative action

By Tish Lakes

When Bob Skelly ran for the NDP leadership, he advocated "empanelling" as a nomination procedure for every constituency, regardless of whether or not there was an NDP incumbent MLA in the riding. Since Skelly has become the leader, the issue has or will come up in all B.C. ridings.

Empanelling involves setting up a panel of candidates to elect the party's challenger for provincial elections. It ensures that no nominee is chosen by acclamation and that the concept of challenging an incumbent becomes acceptable because party officials help to set up the candidate panel.

Skelly said the empanelling procedure would be one way of increasing equal opportunity for potential women candidates and would also encourage sitting MLAs to pay close attention to their ridings, because they would be challenged for the nomination at each election.

The Nelson-Creston NDP have rejected empanelling for the present time. Opinion is divided on whether it is the best way to encourage women to become candidates, though the idea of challenging incumbents is largely non-controversial.

Given the record of the Social Credit party, feminists often find themselves in the NDP camp even if they don't agree with all of the party policy. The lack of female candidates, especially in "winnable" ridings has been a sore point for feminists in all parties. Skelly's empanelling policy was a response to calls to encourage women, and the rejection of it within the local riding may create some waves.

W.A.C. Bennett took the art of vote-by-blackmail, that

is vote for us or the other guy will get in and ensure certain doom, and made it into the definite style of politics in B. C. Voting out governments rather than voting in governments is a well-established Canadian tradition, but voting against the official opposition in order to avoid such things as heavy taxes on resources industries, which the "free enterprise" side implements anyway, is uniquely B.C.

Ironically, feminists are sometimes put in a similar position by the NDP. Elect us, the line goes, because there are no electable alternatives and if you don't actively support us the bad guys will get in and erode women's rights even further. Too many times this has proved to be exactly the case, but still the question remains; when can we stop voting against somebody that is going to make a bad situation worse, and start voting for someone whose policies we can really believe in?

Nelson-Creston MLA Lorne Nicholson said the main reason for rejecting empanelling was that it has not been fully defined within the province. "Nobody had any idea what it meant," he said, adding that the issue will come up again in the riding.

Asked if he supported the idea of challenging the incumbent, Nicholson said it would be useful in ridings where some incumbent candidates have repeatedly failed to get themselves elected as MLAs. But with incumbent MLAs, statistics show there is a 5 to 10 per cent vote advantage to a party running that person again, he said. "That's certainly something that people would want to think about," he said.

Nicholson said empanelling is not the only way to encourage women to run. And, once a woman candidate is chosen, a major problem remains in getting good

women candidates who don't get elected MLA to run again, even where they came very close to winning, he said.

Celeste Culpepper has held every executive position in the Nelson-Creston NDP Association except secretary. She said she is in favour of a challenge to incumbent MLAs but doesn't think empanelling is the way to go about making that challenge. She would prefer to see people offer themselves as challengers, rather than have the executive solicit people to form a panel.

Culpepper said she would prefer a nominating convention to empanelling. She said Skelly seems to think that empanelling is an integral part of nominating conventions, and if that is so, she will go along with empanelling.

She said there was a danger that the provisions for half the challenging panel being women might cause a kind of tokenism, where women would stand for nomination who were ambivalent about standing, rather than women who were highly motivated to run.

"I don't want to see the Nelson-Creston nominating convention made a farce in any way," she said. "If there's strong active encouragement for people to run you don't need empanelling."

Culpepper said the participation of women has increased greatly in the last ten years, from a traditional auxiliary role to women making up half the riding executive. She said there are a few women in the party who are feasible challengers but who have "personally made the decision not to run."

Obstacles to women candidates, she said, are their lack of experience in running as candidates, accompanying lack of confidence. This could be met by encouraging women to run for local school boards and civic councils, she said, which will give women both confidence and experience and also the necessary exposure which a nominee must have in the public eye.

The major obstacle to women running for MLA, though, is their traditional role as homemakers, Culpepper said. Being an MLA "is an incredible demand on your life" and women find it difficult to be away from their families for

Continued on page 15

Services Centre active in Castlegar

By Joy Green

The Castlegar Community Services Centre (CCSC) is becoming an increasingly visible and vital resource in Castlegar, another Kootenay community suffering under government cutbacks, limited jobs and decreased social programs. Formerly the Volunteer Exchange, created and run by the Kootenay Child Care Society, the CCSC became an independent, non-profit society 3 years ago, and currently functions with one paid co-ordinator and lots of volunteers.

Sally Glock, M.A. (Counselling Psychology), is co-ordinator of the Centre. The CCSC is a drop-in and resource centre where anyone can obtain information about community events and services, counselling, or an opportunity to volunteer. It is also possible to enjoy a cup of coffee, relaxed conversation, and toys for the kids while you consult the bulletin board, books and other resource material in the comfortable, livingroom-like atmosphere. "As people are of prime importance, our office is the one place where people can come for help and receive it immediately...We have no waiting list," said Glock.

The Centre, located at 1215 Third Street (above West's Department Store), is open 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, and operates a crisis line which provides contact even when the Centre is closed. "Crisis calls are referred to Emotions Anonymous or dealt with by Ms. Glock or a volunteer...Emotions Anonymous is a grass-roots mental health self-help group whose ideology is similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. They meet at CCSC on Tuesdays at 8 p.m."

Money for the Centre operations must be applied for/raised every year. The Ministry of Human Resources provides most of the funding, with additional money from the City, Regional Districts I and J, United Way and a few private donations. "Our mandate is to provide services

needed in this area. As coordinator, I have a lot of say in deciding what we will do, and am very open to suggestions. We will help to organize, and provide space for projects that local people or groups want to start," said Glock.

The Centre provides a visiting service for shut-ins, and a time for people new to Castlegar to drop in (Tuesdays, 11 a.m.). There is also a time when pregnant women and new mothers are encouraged to get together at the Centre, to meet each other, share experiences, problem-solving skills, or whatever. A few years ago, a child-care cooperative operated out of the centre. "There is a co-op daycare centre in Castlegar but if any women want to organize another co-op babysitting service, we would be available to help with that," she said.

Glock described a group for single parent mothers which she started in response to a need for a group as a need for a place where women could contact each other for mutual support and problem-solving. Glock coordinates the group working with Gloria Sme (RWS). "We started by helping members to define their needs and set goals for the group, which includes aspects of a workshop (teaching of specific skills, such as child care and parenting skills), a therapy group and a mutual support group where women can identify common problems, skills and resources. The group is not always a happy time; heavy issues come up and we try to help participants express, understand, and let go of some of the pain of past experiences." It was intended initially to meet twice a week for three weeks. It quickly expanded to six weeks, and now the participants plan to continue meeting on their own. Glock is planning to start a second group, depending on need and funding.

If you are interested in learning more about the CCSC, or in becoming involved in any of the current programs, contact Sally Glock or leave your name at 365-2104.



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Strikers take on 'the Man'

In May, after completion of research for this article, Eatons signed a first contract with its employees, following a six-month strike. The strikers settled for a contract which contained provisions they rejected in January, but they were caught in a bind - under Ontario labour law, if they did not settle by May 30, they stood to lose the right to return to work.

The women voted to go back, although this was not an actual vote on the contract. They decided not to vote on the contract itself, because it would have given non-striking workers the chance to cast ballots, and therefore an opportunity to vote down the contract, keep the strikers out of the workplace and subsequently cause them to lose their jobs.

Strikers had mixed reactions as they prepared to return to work at Eatons. They wished they had won more, but felt proud knowing they had shown Eatons that it was not the master.

By Rita Moir

Bundled against the dregs of a blizzard, Eaton's strikers at Toronto's Yonge and Eglinton store sat on a planter absorbing some late winter sun. An 83 year old retired packing plant worker joined their line. A musician's union member came by to wish them luck.

Across the country in Edmonton, Eaton's striker Claudia Giovannetti joined her first march. It was International Women's Day. She spoke to the crowd, then walked with it past the chain's downtown store - "Boycott Eaton's" the crowd roared into the city's downtown wind tunnels.

1,500 workers like Giovannetti have been on strike since November against the T. Eaton company, Ltd., which owns 110 stores in Canada. It employs 35,000 workers. The contest between the employees and the Eaton family is major. Eaton's fought off a union organizing drive 35 years ago. If it allows this one to succeed, it will face union drives in many of its other stores.



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The fight is also important to the women's movement. Eighty per cent of the workers at Eaton's are women; they face sexual harassment, very little job security, and favouritism in promotions and pay.

One woman at the Toronto picket line has worked at Eaton's for 17 years. After her first five years she quit when a younger woman she trained got a promotion she felt she deserved herself. She charged that the younger woman was involved with the boss, and got the promotion due to favouritism. The older woman was told she was too fat.

"We're not plastic people," she said, striking a mannequin pose.

When she returned to work after six months, she started at the bottom again. Her first five years at Eaton's counted for nothing.

Pay is low. Pensions are extremely low and the amount is unpredictable.

Sometimes women with 10 years experience get the same pay as women with two years. Take home pay for full-time workers averages from \$170 to \$245 per week. One woman gets a monthly pension of \$70 after 16 years at Eaton's. Another with 18 years experience received \$30.84 per month, with a \$25 bonus at Christmas.

Picketers have been impressed with support from the women's movement. Women organized the 9,000-strong International Women's Day march to Toronto's downtown Eaton's, a benefit that raised \$10,000, regular picket line support, and numerous demonstrations.

Support has come from Ontario Working Women, the Women's Strike Coalition, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

At one protest, mice were let loose in Eaton's Scarborough store, and in late March, vigils were held at the Eaton family home.

Eaton's claims that the boycott is not affecting sales, but it has responded by printing its own slogans to counter the "Boycott Eaton's" stickers and pins. "I Shopped at Eaton's" proclaim buttons given to customers.

Negotiations have been brief and infrequent. When the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union charged Eaton's with bargaining in bad faith, the Ontario Labour Board ruled in Eaton's favour. There have been other setbacks. When the Ontario Federation of Labour set up a \$50,000 advertising campaign supporting the strike, six radio stations refused to handle the ads.

One of those stations is owned by Standard Broadcasting, owned by Conrad Black. Black is also an owner of the Sterling newspaper chain which runs the Nelson Daily News, Trail Times, Cranbrook Daily Townsman, and Kimberley Bulletin. Black is also a director of Eaton's.

His corporate interlock with Eaton's illustrates well the power structure of Canada and what the Eaton's strikers are challenging.

Black is a director of Eatons of Canada Ltd. and the T. Eaton Acceptance Co. Limited. As well, he is chairman of the Ravenson Corporation Ltd., chairman of the board and chairman of the executive committee of Argus Corp., Ltd., vice-chairman of Norcen Energy Ltd., chairman of the executive committee and CEO of Hollinger Arus Ltd., and a host of other corporate executive positions.

To carry along the corporate interlock, Fredrik Eaton, the president of Eaton's of Canada Limited, and chairman, president and CEO of the T. Eaton Company, is also vice-president and director of Argus Corporation Ltd., and a director of Hollinger Argus Ltd., Norcen Energy Resources Limited and the Ravenson Corporation Limited, all part of Black's constellation.

A list of the clubs Fredrik Eaton belongs to is instructive when the club fees he pays are compared to the wages he pays Eaton's workers. Fredrik Eaton belongs to the Royal

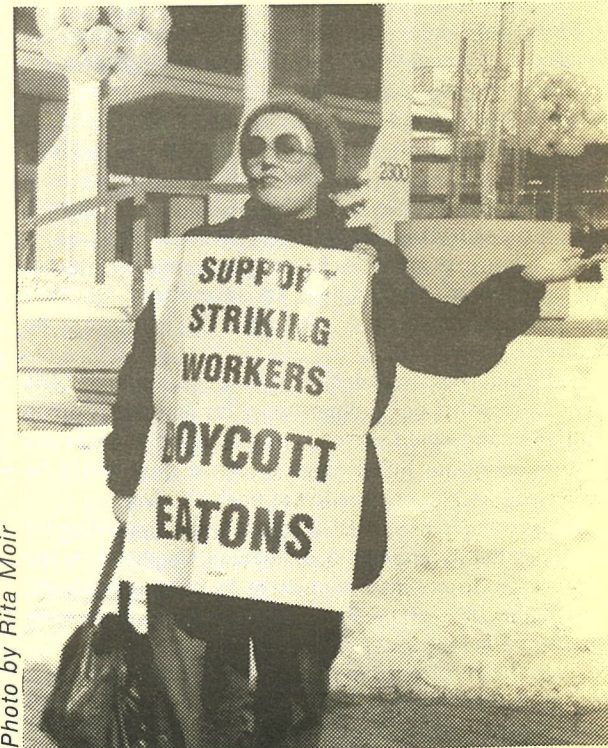


Photo by Rita Moir

"I'm not a mannequin," said Suzanne Oman on the Toronto picket line after 17 years in Eaton's Cosmetic and Bath Dept.

Canadian Yacht Club (initial fee \$8,000.00, annual fee \$1,100.00); Queen's Club (initial fee \$2,500.00, annual fee \$450.00 - tennis); Caledon Ski Club (initial fee \$2,500.00 one share \$350.00, annual fee \$315.00). He also belongs to the Toronto Club, York Club, Badminton and Racquet Club (Toronto), Lyford Cay (Nassau), The Long Point Company (a private hunting reserve on the Long Point Peninsula in Lake Erie. Peter Newman said in The Canadian Establishment that membership is limited to 20 and most memberships are inherited), and Griffith Island (a private hunting club in Georgian Bay. The club was investigated by the Employment Standards Branch and found to be violating the hours of work, overtime and public holiday sections of the Employment Standards Act, and was required to pay back-pay to 11 employees in January 1984).

In The Canadian Establishment, Newman describes the Eaton family as "the closest we've come to having an aristocracy of our own".

It's this type of wealth and view from the top that Eaton's strikers are taking on.

Eaton's claims that 70 per cent of its employees are back at work. The union counters that only two-thirds of the workers went out on strike in the first place at the six stores involved, and about half of those are actively picketing. And they say the boycott is working.

Women at the Toronto picket line, who work in the cosmetics and women's wear department, said they have built personal loyalties with many of their customers over the years. Those customers are respecting their picket lines.

"We want all our members across Canada to think twice about shopping at Eaton's," said Lynn Kaye, co-chairwoman of the employment committee of the 3 million member National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

"The Eaton family gained its wealth on the backs of women and part-time workers, and it's time it started making amends."

Rita Moir is an IMAGES collective member and freelance writer.

Arts Festival breathes life

By Caroline Woodward

"Stunned. It came at a point when I was beginning to lose any remaining hope."

That was Meaghan Baxter's reaction to the announcement of a MILAP grant in late February: a grant which ensured the survival of the Kootenay Lake Summer School of the Arts and Baxter's brainchild, a Multicultural Festival of the Arts. Both events are scheduled for July 22 - August 5 at the David Thompson University campus. Festival performers will be performing on the mainstage on July 26, 27 and 28.

For Baxter, now the Festival Coordinator, the MILAP announcement meant the fulfillment of a process she and Gillian Browning started in April of 1984. Both women were writing students, actively involved in the fight to stall the closure of the University by the provincial government. The future looked bleak but Baxter and Browning decided to form MGB and Associates and investigate ways and means to keep the cultural life of the area alive and flourishing. They made a proposal to conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a multicultural festival in Nelson to the Nelson City Council.



Dance class at Kootenay Lake Summer School of the Arts.

When they were hired, they quickly organized an office, complete with phone and typewriter. In six months, they logged over 1800 hours, contacting large and small scale Festival coordinators in Canada, Oregon and Washington. They prepared statistics, budgets and demographic analyses. Many more hours were spent making presentations to local and provincial organizations. They also created M.A.P.S., a Multicultural Arts Performance Series, and sponsored Holly Arnizen to a packed house in the DTUC sub pub. They received support from the City Council, the DTUC Support Society and the Nelson & District Arts Council.

Meanwhile, Browning found a steady job at the ski hill and Baxter did freelance research on Italian immigration and migration patterns in the Kootenays. So, the grant application went the rounds in Ottawa and plans came to a standstill. Everyone waited and prepared themselves for another "sad, bad news about Nelson" scenario.

But, once again, the DTUC campus will come to life with about 50 courses and intensive workshops in creative writing, dance, theatre, visual and applied arts, massage,

jazz, video art, world politics and live music, dance and theatre performances. Women from across Canada and artists and instructors in the Kootenays will be teaching or performing or both.

The Canada Council and the Kootenay School of Writing are sponsoring workshops and readings by playwright and fiction writer, Margaret Hollingsworth and Lillian Allen, Canada's premier practitioner of dub poetry -- an extension of the African approach to poetry with an emphasis on the rhythm of the spoken word. Her work is a dynamic response to love, oppression, hard times and fighting back. Jamaican-born Allen now lives in Toronto and will perform on the Festival mainstage on July 26. For those who may not have seen her at the 1984 Vancouver Folk Festival or heard her on CBC Radio, this is a special opportunity to see and hear an outstanding performer. The second week of the Writing program will feature a course jointly instructed by freelance journalists Riia Moir and Paulette Jiles, both based in the Kootenays. Jiles and other storytellers will also be performing at the Festival. Irene Mock of Nelson will teach a workshop on propaganda and the media.

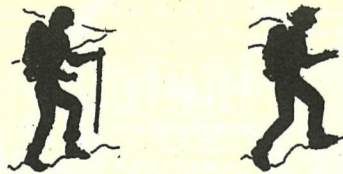
Nida Doherty, currently an artist-in-residence at the Banff Centre of Fine Arts, is teaching two week-long courses in video art. Ann Gibson of Vancouver, an artist participating in Judy Chicago's Birth Project, will present a highly recommended slide show and seminar on what amounts to a visual epic of fabric art and embroidery dedicated to birth, a subject and experience virtually ignored by centuries of artists. Phyllis Margolin of Argentina will teach her very popular watercolours course. Jo Paine from Victoria will do a one day workshop on Elizabethan costume design. Therese Chabot from Concordia University will teach a sculptural installation course and Cynthia Von Frank, also from Montreal, will teach two weeks of basic drawing. Carol Gaskin and Mousi Tehir will team-teach fibre arts and clay at a retreat in Gaskin's home in Winlaw. Tentative bookings have been made with Judith Marcuse and Maureen Allen who specialize in modern and jazz dancing while Jane

Heyman, Janet Wright, Ellen Hitchcock and Sharon Pollack have been approached to teach Theatre courses. Kathy Kidd, a Vancouver City College instructor and keyboard player in several Vancouver groups, one of which is the 18-member international music group Ethnofusion, will perform on synthesizer for the Festival and instruct in synthesizer and a course in Latin American and African drumming. Beth Browning from Salmon Arm will teach voice workshops and perform on the Festival mainstage in operatic selections. Agnes Suherland from Oliver will accompany Browning on piano. Bo Conlan, now based in Vancouver and formerly from the DTUC School of Music, will also teach a voice workshop. Celeste Crowley, well-known for her work with Theatre Energy and the Valhallelujah Rangers, most recently with Theatrepeace is instructing a two week songwriting workshop. Evelyn Armstrong of Merritt is teaching a printmaking course and Sarah McEwen of Nelson will teach a beginners' weaving course. Karen Selk from Victoria will teach an intermediate and advanced silk weaving course. Christine Suherland from Toronto is back (pun intended) by popular demand to instruct therapeutic massage courses.

The women involved in making it all happen from the offices in the Student Union Building are Baxter, Kathy Ireland, Anne DeGrace, Yvonne Jongegan-Ahmad, Eleanor Hopper, Caroline Woodward, and the coordinator of the summer school, for the second year, is Joel Harris. There is a real need for billets for out-of-area performers and for volunteers to assist at Summer School registration, children's events, security, transportation and first-aid on site. There is also ample opportunity to operate food booths or be part of the arts and crafts market. The Kootenay Lake Arts Celebration address is 711 Tenth Street and our phone number is 352-2402.

Caroline Woodward is a Nelson writer who is currently a publicist for Kootenay Lake Summer School of the Arts and Multicultural Festival.

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Feminist Manifesto

A call for principles

... This article is a critique of the Canadian Women's Movement - specifically of the primacy of the strategy of lobbying for legislative reforms - and a call to feminists to reclaim our voice as feminists; to ensure, wherever we live and in whatever ways we can, that the feminist voice and the feminist perspective is central to the debates and decisions about women's issues and women's lives. Presenting the Manifesto for publication in feminist magazines and newspapers is the first step toward our aim of encouraging debate and discussion about the strategies and issues, debate which we see being stifled and limited by the rush to reform...

The Working Group on Sexual Violence: Kate Andrew, Jan Barnsley, Megan Ellis, Debra Lewis and Frances Wasserlein

At sometime during the past ten years, the word "Liberation" disappeared from the Women's Liberation Movement. Our analysis was softened so as to reach the ears of those who govern even before we said it out loud to each other. Our demands became polite requests, and our reality became a negotiable position.

As the strategy of lobbying government for legislative reforms became the movement's primary (if not its only) strategy, the task of articulating the requests has increasingly been undertaken by women situated close to the seat of government and women who speak the language of power. These liberal lobbyists seek the small reforms which enable the state to maintain an appearance of addressing the subordination of women.

The primacy of these lobbyists is not a new problem. As one feminist collective noted in 1975:

"...they talk about women's oppression as a legal question, as if getting some legislation passed will solve our situation. For them it is always a social (societal) question or a legal question. Never is it a question of power, real power - economic (who owns), military (whose

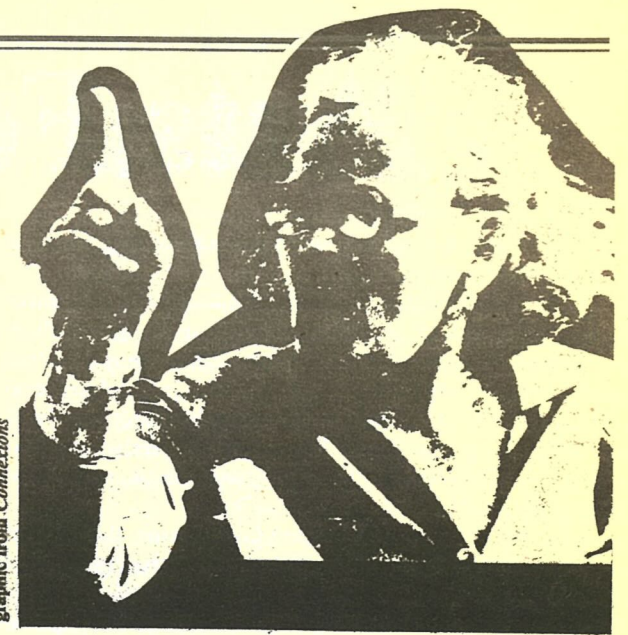
physical strength) and political (who rules). It is never a question of what it means to take that power and distribute it among us all." (1)

Today as pressure increases from the right and from a declining economy, a perception has developed that it is necessary for feminists to be "reasonable" and to accept the legal/legislative framework of the state. These pressures are from the small but powerful sector of society which would send women back to the hearth and home, to the promised bliss of unquestioning obedience to "Nature", man, god and the state. In comparison with the threat from these forces, the state can be seen as a friendly and benevolent patriarch whose allegiance we must maintain, whose wrath we dare not incur lest he decide to pay greater heed to our R.E.A.L. opposition and their brothers on the right.

It is in times like these that the call to unity, the invocation of sisterhood, is most often heard. Criticism from "within the ranks" is silenced. Centralization of power is defined as "practical" and "necessary." The basis of agreement becomes the lowest common denominator. Our collective voice is heard, from behind a polite but slightly nervous smile, to utter statements devoid of content or commitment, words without emotion, and demands without conviction.

Just as our perspective has frequently been lost in our approach to the state, so has the left frequently co-opted the feminist voice. However sympathetic many of us are to some of the issues raised by the left, it is undeniably true that ending the subordination of women is not a primary focus - regardless of how well they have learned the rhetoric of feminism. To paraphrase one feminist writer, while liberals abandon us to the state, the left abandons us to batterers and rapists. (2) A truly feminist voice accepts neither, and is as wary of false alliances with the left as it is of co-optation by the state.

The process of analyzing women's oppression and acting to end it is the work of the many feminists working



graphic from Connexions

at what is sometimes fondly, sometimes condescendingly, (and all too rarely respectfully) called the grass roots level. This is the work of the transition houses, rape crisis centres, women's centres, and the many other women's services which gather together the wide range of experience of Canadian women.

Talking together, breaking the silence, is a conspiracy to effect fundamental change. Articulating our experience is a radical act-words such as rape, pornography, battery, incest, racism, poverty, homophobia and abortion are not polite words in the vocabulary of those who have power. Translating these words (e.g. sexual assault, obscenity, family violence) may sound more polite, but it will only disguise the problem and serve to temporarily obscure the ugly reality of patriarchy, a reality which feminists have worked so hard to uncover.

The struggle to uncover this reality, and to have it heard, has been a long and painful one for countless feminists. We have succeeded in challenging myths about the lives of women. We have collected and displayed a huge quantity of evidence of the injustices perpetrated against women. We cannot afford to have our reality distorted and made more palatable by those of our gender to whom the government and the media choose to listen.

We ought not to be surprised that those who govern choose to listen. They have an interest in tinkering with bits of the state machine to try to show that, while it is not perfect, it is responsive to our needs. We must recognize, however, that they choose to listen only to some of us: to those who will speak in softened voices, to those who will dress as befits the occasion, to those who will be "reasonable" and "realistic" and never demand "the impossible." It is those women who are chosen, and whom we have permitted, to consult, to present briefs, to talk to the media, and to negotiate our experience. They are often not given the time and money, and sometimes they lack the inclination, to undertake the slow and cumbersome process of involving the very women they are asked to represent.

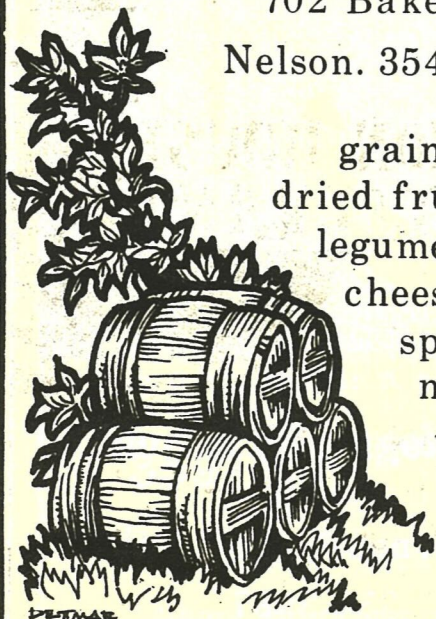
The timetables of the government and the media are superimposed upon the process by which women talk together, analyze and decide our strategy. When the others' timetables win out, as they so often do, it is our own democratic process and women's needs which become lost.

These timetabling pressures are most keenly felt by those women in proximity to power. This superimposed sense of urgency has created a resistance in them to accepting the slow but essential process of untangling the web of women's oppression.

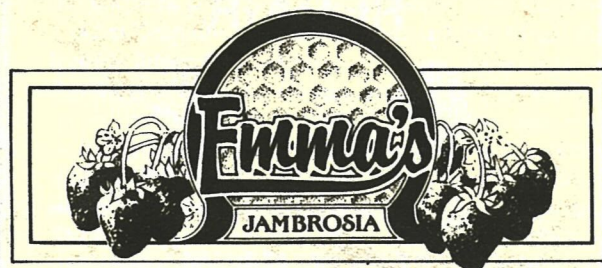
It is the victims of rape, battering, incest, poverty, homophobia, racism, etc. who must live with the compromises made in our name. The terror in our lives is minimized and marginalized. Because lobbyists have often conceded so much for the few gains, the umbrella of protection with which we are left is stripped of all but its frame.

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Yet to challenge the bargain basement sale of our experience is to be called strident, idealistic, divisive, man-hating, and, worst of all, "unreasonable." These are labels which are designed to silence women.

Yet we know from the history of our own movement that polite deference to power is not an avenue for change. We know that the compromises made in our name are not strides forward, but merely directions to be content with running in place. We know that silence is not heard.

Our talking to each other is the strength of our movement and the breadth of our conspiracy. The differences create the friction which moves us forward. The call to unity, the demands to compromise, to be "realistic," to defer to the government chosen "experts" as our representatives, to develop "efficient" organizations, to be acceptable to the media, are all ways to hush the chorus of voices that is feminism.

We suffer enormous harm from accepting and adopting policies formulated by "experts" in order to meet the timetable of a government department, parliamentary committee or organization's constitution. We must learn not to respond on initial impulse fearing that if we refuse to meet the media or government's timetable, we will forever be silenced.

None of this means, of course, that we can afford to ignore the state in an attempt to create a utopian feminist community. It is tempting to isolate ourselves and pretend that it is possible to build a world on feminist principles without ever directly confronting the power invested in the state. It may be less overwhelming to turn the focus of work inward, convincing ourselves in the process that the power structure as presently constituted is simply too male, too hierarchical to be actively struggled against. But to do so is to abandon those women whose lives are directly and daily affected by the power of the state, and who are simply in no position to ignore it.

However, when we do take on the state, it is essential that our demands for change be grounded in an analysis of power. We must cease to scurry after the crumbs we are offered in the name of real change. While we work toward those short term goals that will make the lives of some women easier (and indeed may be literally life saving in some cases), we must not lose sight of the revolutionary change that will ultimately eliminate our oppression. We must choose our issues and our strategies carefully. Whatever work we do with institutions of the state must not be done at the expense of our organizing work with women, or we will lose not only our capacity to resist co-optation, but also the impetus and base for independent action. We must take the initiative, and not be constantly locked into the timetable and the agenda of the state.

We are calling for a reclaiming of a feminist voice. It is not the voice of one woman, but of many women doing many kinds of work. It is a voice which does not hesitate to express the breadth of women's experience, the depth of women's subordination, the height of women's creativity, and the power of women's rage. It is the voice not of one organization, but of the work of many women and many women's groups. It is not a voice situated only in central Canada, at the door of the government, but in many communities across the country. It is a voice which must be reclaimed if we are to succeed in our struggle to end women's oppression.

To reclaim our feminist voice means recognizing that feminism and feminist work is the basis on which the Women's Liberation Movement has been built, the grounding that has made the Movement relevant, dynamic and effective. This is not time for revisionism, no time to deny our roots or compromise our strength. Reclaiming our feminist voice means defining and describing women's issues not from a theoretical or legislative perspective but from the perspective of women. It means speaking out as feminists, taking every opportunity to put women first and to tell the truth about women's experience - in the media, in our own communities, in meetings and conferences and work-



shops, in feminist publications, in public and in private. It means we must analyze and debate the issues and resist attempts to short-circuit that process. Reclaiming our feminist voice means continuing to build our analysis of the state and political theories-based on our own experience-to inform our strategies and actions. It means saying no to demands for simplistic solutions to the complexities of women's subordination. It means demanding what women need, not what the state or our potential allies will accept. Reclaiming our feminist voice means continuing to work for and with women and it means respecting the expertise we have gained through that work in women's centres, rape crisis centres, transition houses, and countless other feminist organizations. It means setting our own priorities, strategies, and

timetables for participating in legislative reform efforts. As feminists in the 80's we must-as we did in the sixties and early seventies-name our experience, define our issues ourselves, and we must dare to express our commitment and our rage. As feminists we must and we will regain the initiative from the forces that would limit and control us.

Footnotes

1. "The Liberal Takeover of Women's Liberation," *Feminist Revolution*, New York: Redstockings, 1975, p. 127.
2. Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence*. Signs, Summer 1983, vol. 8, no. 4, p. 643.

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Dehumanization + dem

By Sam Simpson

The following article uses the terms welfare and welfare recipients throughout even though the official term in B.C. is Guaranteed Available Income for Need [G.A.I.N.]. This reflects both the usage by the people interviewed and the general public, as well as their attitudes toward the actual spirit of the Ministry of Human Resources [MHR]. Circumstances have been changed and details omitted throughout to protect identities.

* When my baby turned 6 months old, I turned into an "employable person" and MHR started to treat me like shit. Up and down streets, doing "job searches" business people would get very frustrated "no, I don't have any jobs!" I was beginning to believe I was unemployable after being so demeaned by welfare. If you are "employable" you must go to monthly meetings and they lock the door at the beginning. If you are only one minute late, they won't let you in and you don't get your cheque. The meetings themselves (such as doing resumes) are worthless. I was being punished for the unemployment situation and for being a single parent with one child.

I was tired of being hassled and when I found a job I took it. I hadn't wanted to go back to work before my baby was 2 years old. It made it very difficult for both of us especially because the job entailed shift work and I was breastfeeding my baby. It takes the choice of breastfeeding out of your hands and limits your belief system. But it also denies the child because breastfeeding is undoubtedly the best for the child.

This story is one of many I recorded from intensive interviews with seven single parent mothers, four of whom are presently collecting welfare. I am one of those who have been off welfare for periods between 6 months to 1½ years. The information is based on the experiences of these women plus that of their friends and acquaintances. This group has collected welfare for periods ranging from 1½ years to 5 years. The mothers who are still welfare recipients all have 2 or 3 children; those of us who aren't have only one child. A woman with only one child is considered employable as soon as the child is six months old, although a woman with two children under twelve is considered unemployable even though both her children may be in school.

All the women interviewed are well educated and politically aware from both rural areas and small towns in the Kootenays. All have communities of friends to act as an extended family support system and were aware of this and other "advantages" that they have. Even with these factors however, the stress levels of their lives, the poverty, and the attendant lack of self confidence are considerable. None had managed to entirely escape the destruction of self esteem while they were collecting welfare. All had lots to say about their lives, social workers, and the social welfare system.

All mothers are working women

* I value my work as a mother. It's work that needs to be honoured and paid. I need to be with my kids when they need me to be. I feel like I'm working and the majority of the time I feel that it is my right to get welfare. But there's a conflict because your work isn't even recognized. It's



*ALL of
society is
responsible
for ALL
the children*

From a Chilean Unidad Popular poster

depressing to me that the job of parenting is not valued. I understand how easy it is to fall into the trap of our feeling that we're "not doing anything" because I'm one step away from that feeling a lot of time.

The reality of nuclear families has gone but not the mythology. It's a struggle to balance parenting and "working", it's a new thing to do. I feel more radical about young kids (under five) being at home rather than at daycare. But being a parent 24 hours a day is not the answer. Communal living and children feels important to explore.

* There's lots of money in this country, it's just concentrated at the top. Everybody in the country has a right to part of the money, everyone has a right to live.

* Even though I knew the politics and my rights as a mother, I could never be clear to anyone on it. But I have no regrets, it was the only way to do it with a child.

* I think of myself as a mechanic. No one would ever deny that a mechanic does important work and deserves to be well paid even though the work is not 'productive' labour. Just because my 'machines' are human doesn't make my work worthless. In fact it should make it worth more.

* I believe parenting is an important job and that continuity is important. If the person that has been doing it is willing to continue they should have the job.

* Every child psychology book says young children need a primary care giver. In this society, no one gets paid for childcare so only the mother (or maybe the father) will give the kind of care needed.

Social workers

One thing everyone had in common was that no one really trusted or valued social workers. I'm using the term social workers in this article to apply to both people with social work degrees and financial aid workers who have much less training. Social workers who don't work for MHR were generally seen as somewhat less threatening. Not all of the experiences related happened in the

Kootenays.

* If they are any good (sympathetic, compassionate people who are paying any attention to you at all) they won't stay on the job. Under NDP welfare, they tended to do what they could to help. Now with Social Credit welfare, they do what they can to make it difficult. One worker who intends to quit told me "I used to think I was helping them (welfare recipients) but all I do now is hassle them."

Financial aid workers were experienced as both policeman and judge with their attitude of "prove to me that you're not cheating."

* Some of the people who take the 8-month social services course to become financial aid workers are ex-welfare recipients. They now want to be in control over other people. They never catch on that they are perpetuating the system that did them in. Many workers are jealous of their clients, if only of their imaginations. They resent it if you don't fit their idea of how you should act or dress. They want you to be a nice little welfare person.

* They will only help on their terms. They had no respect for me and would not listen to me about my kids and what they needed. They only wanted to use the kids to try their programs on. It felt like they were trying to get me to grovel.

* Welfare has never been adequate and you have to deal with people who think you should be getting less.

* When I wanted to go back to school, I was told there was "too much stress in being a student." Poverty is the worst stress of all. I would rather have the money per hour that social workers spend talking to you and do without the advice.

* Social workers have an illusion of power, they tend to talk about their 'clients' as non-human. They make fun of them, are very moralistic and still deal with welfare as some sort of charity. But if it wasn't for their clients, they wouldn't have a job either. Some of them understand that. They can't let you get too far ahead because they aren't that far themselves.

moralization = welfare

* If you need social services for any reason, it's scary because you are afraid of losing your kids. You are totally at their mercy because they control you financially. One time I cried in an MHR office because I was so frustrated with their inhumane, illogical policies. The social worker threatened to apprehend my children because I was an emotional mess.

* You get the feeling that you did something wrong and they (social workers) are trying to get you back for it. Hopeless, stupid and useless is the feeling you get about yourself.

Social workers are generally the product of the middle class and bring their middle class morals, values and education with them. Few have any comprehension of their own biases. Even fewer have a comprehensive class analysis which could function to make them into radical people.

Married to the state

"The woman next door hates me but she's stuck in a prison with this jerk (an abusive husband) and resents my position." This reaction by women who are living with men is quite common. They see you as eating your cake (money to exist) and having it too (not having to put up with a man).

Many women have gone from a succession of being dependent on father and husband to then being dependent on the state. This dependency is an integral part of the sexism of our society which perpetrates the financial, emotional and physical dependency of women, especially women with children. However, within the framework of dependency on the state a woman does have a degree of financial and emotional control. Exerting this control in a public way however is unseemly behaviour in a welfare recipient.

* If I go out and have a good time, I don't want anyone who knows I'm on welfare to see me. I feel like they would think I was stealing their money. Plus I feel responsible to live down 'welfare myths'. I don't want people to think it's not so bad being on welfare. I want them to know that I am poor, because I am.

* I feel guilty in a store buying donuts or dogfood. It's stupid, but I don't know anyone who doesn't have this paranoia.

However, none of the women wanted to go back living with the fathers of their children. Being dependent on an individual man was not seen as a solution. Most felt that on welfare at least you didn't have to sleep with someone.

* At first I felt relieved that I could still feed the kids but now I can see that it's the same as marriage in that you have to account for your actions and how you spend the money.

A male neighbour once said, "Well, if women don't live with assholes there's some point to welfare." At least half of the women interviewed had removed their children from physically and/or sexually abusive fathers. These women have no doubt at all that as bad as welfare might be it is better than living with those men.

Community attitudes

Welfare recipients are among this society's primary outcasts and discrimination is widespread. The manner in which you are treated can affect your life in physical and

financial ways as well as emotional. When you are looking for a place to rent and you say the word welfare "you see the smiles in their faces freeze." When you are repeatedly refused accommodation you end up in an unsuitable home for you and your children. Cramped, ugly, noisy, run-down and dirty rentals are common even when more suitable places are available for similar rents. Many mothers haven't had a bedroom of their own for years and numerous moves are common.

The best method mentioned for avoiding these problems is to lie. As the prospective landlord is asking you what you do, you boldly state "I'm a teacher" or whatever else somebody once paid you to do.

Dentists generally don't like welfare patients because of the length of time taken and the amount of payment made by MHR. Many dentists won't take patients who can't pay them either totally or for the difference when the dental work is done. Shopping around for a dentist who will take you is demoralizing and worse if you end up with the most incompetent one in town.

Finding a doctor is easier but it's amazing just how much a medical receptionist can convey in a look and tone of voice once they see the W on your medical card. This social disapproval is everywhere - shopkeepers, bank tellers and neighbours all let you know you are a failure and a misfit. The comments, "Oh, and there were some single mothers on welfare", "she's on welfare you know", "don't pay any attention to her, she's on welfare" are heard repeatedly. The speakers leave little doubt they are talking about the dregs of society.

Many people think that you have it easy being on welfare, that "you're on the gravy train". The working poor can't afford dental care and their children don't go downhill skiing. As increasing numbers of marginally employed people are very poor the position of those collecting welfare seems easier. There is some degree of security in the monthly cheque. The social and emotional costs of welfare recipients are not recognized. If you can manage to survive in B.C. in the 1980's with a combination of jobs (many of them "make work") and unemployment insurance there is little or no stigma. Welfare is perceived as substantially different and welfare recipients as those who have lost their rights as citizens.

Poverty, isolation & paranoia

Being very poor socially isolates women and their children.

* I could afford a fee for a night class but not for childcare so I could go.

* My kids are excluded from the community because they can't participate in anything that needs a cash outlay.

Often it is poverty combined with social stigma which isolates them.

* People on welfare tend to isolate themselves because they are objects of charity. I'm lucky because I've mostly refused to take the role on. But last winter I was beginning to think, act, and dress the way I was supposed to as a welfare recipient.

* There have been periods when I've been really down. I can be really hard, you have no privacy. They have access to all information about you. You never have any money to do things with your kids. I don't like living hand to mouth. You feel the lack of money even though you

Facts and figures

In Canada, 50% of families headed by a single female are living below the poverty line. One out of five children and one out of seven families live below the poverty line. British Columbians have had the greatest increase (140%) in numbers of poor from 1980 to 1984.

At \$3.65 an hour, B.C. has the lowest minimum wage in Canada. A woman and her seven month old baby in B.C. can receive a maximum of \$640 a month from welfare, or the equivalent of her gross pay working a 40 hour week at \$4.00 per hour.

The maximum childcare subsidy she could receive would be \$204.00 per month, while average costs for full-time daycare are \$300.00 per month. Subsidies for children older than three years are \$176.00 per month. If the parent earns over \$775.00 per month, the subsidy is decreased. These subsidies have not increased since 1981.

MHR does not generally inform welfare recipients of special provisions that exist, such as additional daycare costs for "social needs," but such organizations as the Nelson Women's Centre and the Unemployed Action Centres can advise people of these policies.

Single Parent support groups are meeting in both Nelson and Castlegar. The Nelson group meets Monday morning at the Nelson Women's Centre. The group desperately needs volunteers to provide childcare during the meeting. Call 352-9515 or 352-9871 for further information. In Castlegar, the number is 365-2104 (see story on page 3).

know other things are important.

* I told myself and told myself I was doing socially important work - both in raising kids and in the community but it doesn't work when you get the opposite message from the workers in the welfare office.

Women on welfare without the advantage of a social support group are known to be in more extreme distress. They have no support of being valued by others both as a person and for the work of parenting they are doing. It is difficult to be effective as a parent if you don't feel good about yourself. Mothers with one child have the regular experience of being devalued each month in the MHR office.

When people have little adult contact and can't even afford to get a telephone they forget how to talk to other adults. Although MHR still has a policy that allows them to pay for some child care for welfare recipients' "social needs" this is rarely utilized. As there is no preventative support, a family is not helped unless they are in a post crisis situation. The stress of their poverty and welfare stigma is both woman and child destructive. Being on welfare makes people into stereotyped welfare recipients.

Fear and paranoia are common associates with being dependent on the state for subsistence.

* Every time you get a government letter in the mail,

Continued on page 15

Farm women work for change

By Rita Moir

When Dollie Kaetler stood up at the Women and Words Conference in Creston last February, she told us she was angry that women's issues get so little coverage in the media. She talked about a world conference of farm women held in Vancouver two years ago - 1500 women from 60 nations addressing important political issues.

Dollie Kaetler was at that world conference, representing Women's Institutes in B.C. She lives in Lister, near Creston. A month after the Women and Words conference, she welcomed me into her home for an interview with IMAGES.



Dollie Kaetler at her home in Lister.

I expect we each had some preconceived notions of the other - she from a women's organization I viewed as fairly conservative, and me from a feminist newspaper (and she had a few choice words for women's liberation during the course of our afternoon together).

After lunch with her husband, Arthur, and her son, James, we huddled over the dining table, where she spread out dozens of Women's Institute newsletters. She'd spent five-and-a-half hours the day before underlining select passages, jotting notes, preparing for my visit.

It was an exhilarating few hours - Kaetler breaking into a Women's Institute song while I took her picture against the afternoon sun breaking through the windows, her son (who has a degree in metallurgy) dashing out to apply for a job at the 7-11, Kaetler smacking fist into hand to emphasize a point while we both expounded on our views.

There were, not surprisingly, some differences of opinion, as well as areas of agreement. The differences include abortion, lesbian rights, and capital punishment. Our positions agreed on pornography, pensions for farm women, nuclear disarmament and wife battering.

But first, a bit of history.

The Women's Institute was founded in Stony Creek, Ontario in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless, who wanted to end the isolation of farm women in Canada. Kaetler brought out a wall hanging with Hoodless's words, "A nation cannot rise above the level of its homes, therefore, women must work and study together to raise our homes to the highest possible level."

Sixty-six years ago, the Women's Institutes formed the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, and they are part of the worldwide Associated Country Women of the World, with more than 60 countries represented.

The Women's Institutes take positions on many issues, from clean water and absentee foreign ownership of Canadian farmland, to pornography, wife battering and nuclear disarmament. Policy decisions are slow and

democratic. There appear to be no top-down decisions. When the Women's Institute takes a position against pornography as being degrading and exploitive, the decision will be firmly supported by its members, because they raised and debated the issue in the first place.

In Creston, for example, the Young Women's Institute brought the anti-pornography NFB film, *Not a Love Story*, to town, twice. Kaetler took her minister and some Sunday school teachers to see it.

"I was very upset by the money made by porn," said Kaetler. "I wrote a letter to the local paper. I feel our whole advertising media and movie world has been degrading women for such a long time. It's an undermining of women."

"And (as in that film) there are women producing the stuff. They are selling you and me down the tube for the almighty buck...that's my sister!"

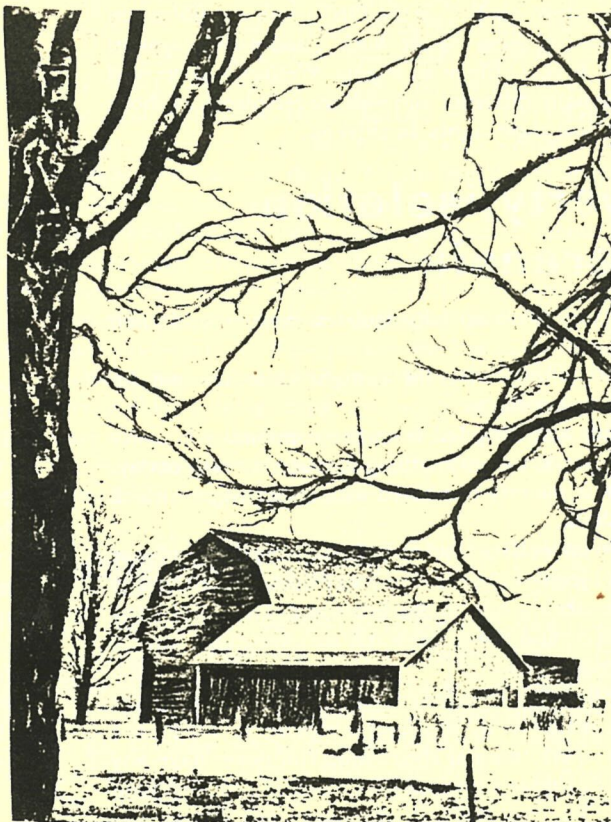
After watching *Not a Love Story*, Creston women went to the local video store and discussed ("'threatened' is too strong a word," Kaetler said) the idea of a consumer boycott with the manager if "D" grade (damaging, degrading and demoralizing) videos weren't removed from the shelves. They were removed. When another video store, with pornography alongside videos for children, opened shortly after, "we closed them down by word of mouth."

The Women's Institute newsletters reflect the strong political positions of the organization, and the educational work the members are undertaking.

A sampling of the June, 1982 Federated Women's Institutes of Canada convention in Fredericton, New Brunswick, includes the following workshops: Human rights of the physically disabled, Canadian health consumers' rights, women and chemical dependency, wife battering, a look at Bill C-53 (rape law), water and sanitation, fashions that restrict women's movements, lobbying politicians, and women and pensions.

(In the report on wife battering, I learned that "the phrase 'rule of thumb' came into being from wife battering. At one time it was lawful for a man to beat his wife, but he could use a stick no thicker than his thumb. Barbaric isn't it?")

Photo by Rita Moir



(In a report on fashion, the conference delegate discusses how styles are used to bind and mold women and children and to portray class differences. The report concludes: "As styles became more practical and less restricting, women became more active and assertive, proving to their men they were no longer to be regarded as the 'little woman' without a brain in her head, but a partner to stand proudly by his side.")

The "partner standing proudly by his side," however, will have to do more than change her style of dress before she gains equal status.

"Many a farmwife is a farm partner, and should be able to pay into a pension plan and not be left poor when she is old and gray," said Kaetler. "We have to put the hammer on a little harder. A man can contribute to the Canada Pension Plan, but a woman only can if she bought into the farm as a legal registered partner. If he dies, she only gets a widow's pension - it's not adequate for a woman to operate a farm."

Wife battering and the lack of services for rural women has prompted the Women's Institute, in Saskatchewan, for example, to become a founding member of the Saskatchewan Battered Women's Advocacy Network. The issue of battering is also becoming an educational focus for the Institute.

When the 48,000-member Federated Women's Institute of Canada takes positions, it lobbies the federal government, through W.I. members like Senator Martha Beilish of Alberta. The W.I. through its worldwide body, the Associated Country Women of the World, also lobbies at the United Nations.

The world women's organization held its triennial meeting in Vancouver in 1983 - there won't likely be another one in Canada for 20 years, but Kaetler said the press ignored it.

"If they had paid attention to us in '83, the people of Africa (Ethiopia) could have been helped sooner. There were women there from Africa telling us of the conditions and needs."

The several thousand delegates to the ACWW raised funds for women's community projects throughout the world, as well as lobbying for improvements in health care and women's status.

After a presentation from the women of Kenya, the 9,000,000-member ACWW raised funds for a well in Kenya that serves a community of 40,000. Cameroon women started an agricultural project, raising sunflowers with a high oil content, and went to the ACWW for the pressing machine they required. Australian women have raised money to build typhoon-proof kitchens on South sea islands.

Kaetler attended two years of Spanish night classes in Creston so she could talk with Spanish-speaking women at the world conference. She recalls with revulsion that some Latin American women were ordered home by their government during the Vancouver meeting.

The "Water for All" campaign is important in the ACWW.

"I met women who carried water 10 miles a day and didn't even know if it was safe to drink," said Kaetler. Now she, and thousands of other women around the world put all their spare change into a piggy bank (hers is a snail that rests on her window sill) and turn the money over to the ACWW - it goes to safe water projects and food and nutrition programs. ("We use to call it the 'milk fund,' but we learned through the Nestle's boycott that powdered milk and formula didn't work.")

The conference brought together women from around the world, an experience many of them will never have. The most inspiring moment for Kaetler was when nearly

3,000 people sang J. Sibelius' Song of Peace at the end of an interfaith service.

Despite a number of areas of agreement between feminist groups and the Women's Institutes, there are sharp disagreements as well.

They are firmly against freedom of choice on abortion. Kaetler said the W.I. believes that "A foetus shouldn't be destroyed under any circumstance, unless the woman would die if she doesn't have an abortion."

Personally, she thinks that women should bear the child, even in cases of incest or rape, although she draws the line in the case of sexually assaulted girls who become pregnant.

Despite the Institute's stance for the sanctity of the foetus, a survey of its members show they are overwhelmingly in favour of the return of capital punishment.

Kaetler said the Institute doesn't have a position on the rights of lesbians, but personally believes that "Medical care is necessary. Any one who practices that sort of thing would not make a good citizen."

Kaetler was unaware that many lesbians are mothers, believing that conception (involving a man) "was against their rules." But she said she didn't know any lesbians, so wasn't aware of issues involving homosexuals.

She has little good to say about the women's movement. She firmly believes it has hurt women.

"This Women's Lib kick did more harm than good," she said. "They portrayed us as hard. We don't have to use four-letter words. We don't have to look like loggers, and we have to pay more attention to the home."

Kaetler strongly supports the principle of equal pay for equal work, as well as provision of good day care. But she argues that women with children under 12 years of age should stay home and rear them.

"You have to choose - a career or home. Or divide up into a frustrated career person, wife and mother. Very few women can do that successfully, unless they are rich and can hire people to do the household chores."

Kaetler's mother was in the Women's Institute, and Kaetler herself wishes she had become involved when she was younger. As a young farmwife, she was invited to join, but said she was too busy raising her family and working on the farm. But she joined later as a way to combat isolation, and now feels this is the means for women to work most effectively in the home and outside it.

Women feed the hungry in Creston

On the wall of the Creston soup kitchen is a reproduction of Millet's "The Gleaners". It's the name unemployed women in Creston chose for their food and clothing bank when they started it two years ago.

Gail Simpson, one of the organizers, said the Gleaners was organized by unemployed women in a Human Resources program who lost their funding. Their lunch program was cut, so they tried to run it without government funding. This was at the time food banks were getting going on the Lower Mainland.

The women looked around at the amount of agricultural surplus in Creston, and asked ranchers, orchardists and farmers for their surplus.

In March, 1983, the Human Resources class held its first food bank in the basement of the East Kootenay Community College. When the class ended, seven women stayed with the food bank project and began gleaning apples, onions, potatoes, carrots and cull eggs.

When they set up a free clothing outlet with the food bank, they were deluged with donations.

"The basement of the college looked like a rummage sale," said Simpson.

In November, 1983, the food and clothing store had to find new premises. College and government workers were on strike as the labour movement and community groups went out in protest against government legislation. The Gleaners didn't want to cross the Solidarity picket line, but still needed a place to set up the food depot, especially since the strike meant hungry people weren't getting their GAIN cheques.

Ann and Gary Deatherage of Creston found quarters for the Gleaners in the Medical Services Building, the group won increasing community support, and soon the Creston Council suggested they try for space in a warehouse owned by the Royal Bank.

The Royal agreed, donated use of a large building on North 11th Avenue just off Creston's main street across from the Legion. The Gleaners pay electricity and gas. The storefront is large enough for both winter and summer storage space, for clothes and root vegetables.

The clothing store and soup kitchen operate four days a week, with the food bank open once a month (except in

emergencies). It's open the second-to-last Wednesday of the month, the week before welfare and pension cheques are issued. People who come in for a bowl of soup often get involved in the storefront.



Gail Simpson at the Gleaners' store in Creston.

Simpson said it took awhile for the Gleaners to break through in the community. But they have built a strong base, and Creston's numerous senior citizen farmers, who went through the Depression themselves, have been generous.

The Gleaners got a somewhat twisted sort of boost last fall after a man who'd been to the food bank robbed it the next day. The front page coverage of the incident spurred an outpouring of donations and support from the community.

When the food bank opened, 25 to 35 families used it in March 1983. That increased to about 85 families per month by the end of that year, and over Christmas 1984, 150 families used the food bank in just one week.

Simpson said the Gleaners don't want their food bank to "let the government off the hook. We don't think they're doing enough."

She's interested in making contacts with food banks and Unemployment Action Centre food stores in the Kootenays.

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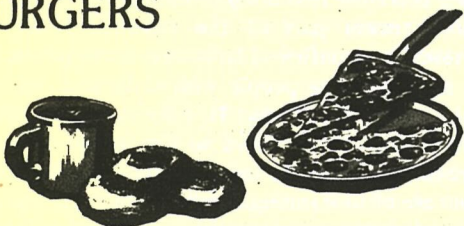
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Locals remain despite attacks

Being forestry workers from the mountains of British Columbia, we were pleased to find our CUSO posting located in Northern Mozambique on a high plateau overlooking Lake Malawi. The area is sparsely populated with extensive forests and even though only 13 degrees south of the equator, the climate is pleasantly mild due to the high elevation. Our affection for the landscape and people made it doubly difficult to leave our posting, even though the disruptions and risks due to war made our work impossible to continue.

We arrived in November of 1983 to replace two B.C. foresters who had begun work with an integrated forestry project centered in Lichinga, the capital of Niassa Province. The project's main objectives are to manage the province's forest resources and to supply local needs for lumber, fuelwood and fruit trees. Also included are three hectares of vegetable production and a number of fish ponds to provide food for the workers. Considering the effects of drought and famine in other parts of Mozambique, we were very lucky. The orchards produce everything from peaches and apples to lichee nuts and mangoes, while our garden provided a constant supply of fresh vegetables.

Our work has been challenging and difficult at times, but always interesting and usually fulfilling. The main tasks have been related to management of existing pine stands (harvesting, thinning, fire-fighting, road maintenance, etc.) and planting new areas. The planting program includes nursery production of seedlings, preparation of planting sites and planting itself. We have also been involved in extension work and maintaining various experimental plots in other parts of the province. Since the arrival of the first cooperants, annual seedling production has increased from a few thousand to over 300,000 with the rehabilitation of a second nursery.

We have also attempted to link our forestry program more directly with wood users through extension work. To reduce transport of fuelwood, eucalyptus plantations are being planted adjacent to brick factories. There are also ongoing programs to supply rural villages, cooperatives and state farms with fruit trees, bamboo for construction,



Donna Macdonald and daughter Brett before leaving for Mozambique.

and other species for shade and windbreaks.

We worked directly with Mozambican men and women as forestry and agricultural technicians, as well as about a hundred labourers and two other cooperants, an Italian sawmill specialist and a Dutch pisciculturist. With the assistance of Canadian Government funding, working conditions have been improved through the purchase of a vehicle and boots, raincoats and safety equipment for the labourers.

It all begins to sound like another CUSO success story: "CUSO aids the people of Northern Mozambique to increase production of food, building materials and fuel." Perhaps it could have been, or will still be, but under the present conditions, no. The reasons become clear when Mozambique is viewed in the context of historical and ongoing regional struggles against racism and colonialism.

Mozambique itself was forced to fight a gruelling ten year war for independence from Portugal. After independence in 1975, Mozambique actively supported the struggle against Rhodesia by applying costly trade sanctions and aiding refugees. The Rhodesians responded with military attacks and the formation of a mercenary army (eventually known as Mozambican National Resistance or MNR) to destabilize Mozambique and limit its aid to the liberation groups. Their operations were restricted to areas adjacent to the Zimbabwe border, and the northern provinces of Mozambique were unaffected.

After Zimbabwean independence in 1980, Mozambique looked forward to peace, a chance to get on with development. But not for long, as South Africa had begun to pursue its policy of destabilization to ensure that countries in the region remain economically dependent on South Africa and are not strong enough to offer meaningful aid to the remaining liberation movements. The training centers and supply lines for the MNR were simply transferred from Rhodesia to South Africa with sufficient logistical support to expand the war to other parts of Mozambique.

When we arrived in Lichinga in 1983, there were still no direct effects of the war being felt in Niassa and it was still considered safe, even for a couple with a child such as ourselves. However, in the early months of 1984 trains from the coast began to arrive irregularly, and with passengers wounded or killed by MNR attacks. For our project, this meant only minor inconveniences of delayed supplies or postponed travel.

In March we were even guardedly optimistic about the future because of the signing of the Nkomati Accord, a non-aggression treaty in which South Africa agreed to suspend all aid to the MNR. However by June it was obvious the MNR were still receiving arms and ammunition from South African sources (via Malawi for

operations in Niassa and other northern provinces.) For us this means more persistent attacks, trains not arriving for weeks at a time and resulting shortages of fuel, soap, cooking oil, clothing, etc. For Mozambique this has meant continued disruption of trade, cuts in electricity, terrorist attacks on trains, buses, schools, health posts and even destruction of international aid bound for drought victims.

In July the MNR began operating in rural areas of Niassa where we were doing extension work and measuring experimental plots. All of this work had to be abandoned. In October the attacks approached Lichinga cutting off our access to Malawi, for us an important source of supplies and emergency medical care. After mortar attacks on a nearby state farm and fuel distribution center, we began to think about the meaning of words like solidarity and commitment, and to consider the possibility of leaving. At this point we were still able to work productively and safely in the forests and nurseries adjacent to Lichinga and decided to stay, being careful to limit travel and minimize risks.

Up to this time all of the MNR victims in Northern Mozambique had been Mozambicans: innocent peasants, truck drivers, health workers or local officials. The cooperant community carried on with the false assurance: "it will never happen to me," even though the MNR had announced that foreign cooperants were considered military targets.

On December 6th, the MNR brutally carried out their threat by murdering nine German and Yugoslavian agricultural technicians on their way to work near Lichinga. We left Lichinga the next week.

For us it meant the senseless deaths of co-workers and friends, and the end of our work in Niassa. It meant the year we had spent working with our Mozambique counterparts, building confidence, making friends, beginning training and creating expectations had come to an abrupt end, with many unfulfilled promises. At the onset of the 84/85 planting season the remaining staff was left with 350,000 seedlings to plant, unassisted. For us it meant feelings of frustration, hopelessness, outrage and nagging guilt for abandoning our colleagues who had to carry on with life regardless of the risks. In Niassa Province numerous cooperatives, state farms and other projects were left without their complement of technical support because of cooperant withdrawals. Unfortunately this is only one incident in a long series of losses suffered by Mozambique at the hands of the MNR and their South African mentors, and these deaths count as only a few of the thousands of people murdered in MNR attacks every year.

The development needs of Mozambicans and their resolve to meet them remain regardless of the hardships. We wish to continue with what assistance we can offer, and are therefore relocating to another forestry posting in a more secure part of the country. However this experience has confirmed for us that development is more than just providing people with skills and materials to supply their basic needs. To fully realize development opportunities, people have to live in an environment where they can exercise some control over their destinies. In the case of Mozambique and southern Africa such an environment cannot exist without an end to apartheid. The work of individuals in Canada and throughout the world to bring pressure against the white minority regime of South Africa and to offer support for liberation groups like the ANC and SWAPO is as essential to development work in Niassa Province as providing cooperants like ourselves.

Donna Macdonald
Gregory Utzig
Maputo, Mozambique
Jan. 20, 1985

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A. S. P. critical of film

We are writing this letter to express our concern about the film, *Hookers on Davie*. We are two women who started the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes in Calgary in 1984, with the help of ASP in Vancouver. We have been involved in feminist and lesbian organizing in Calgary for the past five years.

This film does not help feminists working on the prostitution issue, trying to promote a better understanding of the issue among both feminists and the general public. The filmmakers set out to make a film about hookers on Davie Street, a street in Vancouver which is pimp-free and where a large percentage of the prostitutes are transvestites and transsexuals. This choice brings to light questions about who decides which films are to be made, and what the focus of films is to be. The National Film Board provided a large grant to help cover costs for this film. It is unlikely that another similar amount of money will be forthcoming in the near future for a film about prostitution, so it is unfortunate in our view that the filmmakers chose to focus solely on Davie Street instead of on prostitution generally.

The film is certainly attracting audiences who want to learn about prostitution in Canada. When Janice Cole was in Calgary with the film, she spoke about prostitution, as we assume she did when touring in other parts of North America and in Europe. The audiences are taking her as an expert on prostitution. We feel she should either state emphatically that she is not, she is a filmmaker, or preferably, have someone knowledgeable with her.

One example of where we felt that her lack of knowledge was evident was when she was asked a question about police violence and treatment of prostitutes. She replied that she didn't think it was too bad, and that in fact the police had been very nice to them, even letting them park the van in unauthorized zones while filming. When we brought up that we have heard many stories from prostitutes about police coercion to have sex, or be harassed, raped, beaten or thrown in jail, she made it clear that she didn't think that that was the case.

Here in Calgary, as well as in Vancouver and any city that we have heard prostitutes talk about, prostitutes are seen as legitimate victims for all kinds of violence, and receive little or no protection from the police or the courts.

There were some other areas where her answers differed substantially from what the prostitutes themselves say. In addition, we were surprised not to be introduced as local people working on the issue, with upcoming events or contact numbers mentioned. We have always found that women from out of town who are speaking here try very hard to publicize local groups and events.

The film could have overcome many of the shortcomings caused by the narrow focus if time had been given to the two women involved in the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes to analyze the situation, talk about what it is like for women who work with pimps, and explain the alternatives to the present system and their consequences. Many people who do want to do "the right thing" would have benefited from a discussion of legalization, decriminalization and prohibition. It is too bad that this excellent opportunity to discuss this was missed. Why are the voices of these two women, one of whom has worked as a hooker for 20 years, any less valuable than the other voices in the film? In fact, footage was shot containing this analysis, then edited out. Why? When you are in a position of such power, we feel you should be very careful that the decisions you make further the goals of the people on whose behalf you are speaking.

When Dale and Cole came to Vancouver, they would probably not have been able to set up the interviews without the help of ASP. The filmmakers said they wanted to give the prostitutes a voice. They also promised to give

ASP a free copy of the video when completed, and to have a benefit for them (to take place within the year). Neither of these promises have been kept.

When they returned to Vancouver for the opening, some of the women from the film felt snubbed by the filmmakers, who had been so friendly before. Many of the prostitutes who appeared in the film have had to bear negative consequences as a direct result of being on film and becoming known. The filmmakers are travelling around answering questions about prostitutes and "straight women" to trust each other as it is. Prostitutes, who are fucked over by anyone who feels like it, don't automatically trust feminists or others who say they are on their side. The hostility now felt on the street in Vancouver hasn't made this situation any easier, opened up new doors, or increased understanding. In fact, it has had a negative impact on the connections that are beginning to be forged between prostitutes and other women, feminists included.

It is unfortunate that a film which could have been such a powerful tool both for educating the public about prostitution, and for opening doors for further discussion, has fallen so short.

Lynn Fraser and Cheryl Kehoe
ASP - Calgary

Drag show defended

In reply to the letter of Rita Moir on the subject of the annual West Kootenay Gay and Lesbian drag show, while I was not present and would feel reluctant to dispute feelings of embarrassment and humiliation ("de gustibus non disputandum"), but there is a traditional rationale for drag shows which I did not read as contradicted by Ms. Moir's letter.

The rationale is that what is being mocked is not what real flesh and blood womyn are, but the way in which womyn are represented by a heterosexist society. Personally, I know no womyn who wear boa feathers and the only images of such that I have observed are in dominant cinema, one of the functions of which is to indoctrinate us into sex roles.

The portrayal of a woman by a man dressed as a woman as a sultry, sexy bitch I suggest does not mock womyn but the image of a woman sold to us by dominant media. Perhaps there are womyn who still wear knee-length dresses with stiff petticoats, but because of my sheltered environment I know none. I also find cod-pieces worn out of historical content amusing, worn by men or womyn.

No doubt you may find holes in my logic, but it seems to me that drag mocks no real person but a representation which is in itself insulting to womyn.

David Jacobs
Maple Ridge, B.C.

IMAGES fans write

I was pleased to read your IMAGES publication during my ski holiday in Nelson. I especially liked the regional women's news idea, one we could well use.

The more ideas and support we can offer women in ours and other areas, the easier our task becomes.

We are busy in Quesnel with many programs and

projects. We have over 100 general members, eight active centre program volunteers, 18 full-time staff and nine board members. Our projects include renovations of our leased space - Canada Works, Community Volunteer Co-ordination Project, V.I.P. and Strawberry Patch Childminding Centre. We are currently negotiating for a non-traditional training project through Youth Options.

Good luck to your organization.

Marilee McLean, Co-ordinator
Women's Resource Centre
Quesnel, B.C.

This will be my last cheque for advertising of Devito's. (I am retiring.)

It has given me much satisfaction to support IMAGES and work with you. While I may not be able to advertise officially in IMAGES, you can be assured of my continuing support and endorsement of the philosophy and ideas of the IMAGES collective.

Buddy Devito
Fruivale, B.C.

Here is the amount owing for the past few issues of your great paper. We always enjoy IMAGES and especially appreciate the "plug" for our centre in your article on B.C. Women's Centres.

We are also relieved to hear that your local hospital has ordered (now received, ed.) new equipment for abortions. As you probably know our Cranbrook Hospital Abortion Committee refuses virtually any abortion requests. Nelson is the cheapest alternative for women in our community.

Our membership is not exactly expanding right now, but we are optimistic that interest in the Centre will improve after our upcoming film series and our involvement in Family Court Advocacy work. Our Battered Women's Support group should be getting going. We sponsored a terrific workshop from the Vancouver Battered Women's Support Services in February and now in co-operation with the Crisis Centre, we feel better qualified to handle the needs of a support group.

Kathy Ursaki, Coordinator
Cranbrook Women's Resource Centre
Cranbrook, B.C.

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Peace coalition broadens base

By Viva Flood

The peace movement is now entering a new phase. Not only are more and more people becoming aware of the nuclear danger, but disgust for war motivates more than just those considered to be on the left fringe. It leaps boundaries of prejudice, background, and nationality to encompass a vast cross-section of the population. People are stretching hands of friendship across the "Iron Curtain"; travel, twinning of cities, and letter-writing help to counteract hostile propaganda. Almost every church denomination has its peace group. Most political parties find they must at least appear to favour peace. Professionals are becoming vocal: Doctors and nurses, teachers and scientists, recognized as authorities, give credibility to the movement.

These groups do not merge anonymously into a hierarchical, constitution-bound organization. They are a mosaic of grass-root sproutings, some ad hoc, others remarkably stable. Most of them function with almost no administrative costs, preserve their unique concerns, seek consensus, and pool their energies for the one urgent goal, to prevent war.

People are drawn to the peace movement by their own experience: Quakers, Doukhobors and other conscientious objectors reject war because "Thou shalt not kill." Ecologists are alarmed by threats to the air, the water, the forests, the soil, the oceans, and the creatures who inhabit them. Medical people warn that, with hospitals targeted, treating multitudes of casualties will be impossible. Rotting corpses will cause disease. Socialists see social programs sacrificed to pay for the arms race. Economists deplore inflation and deficit financing, people impoverished by the tax burden, and money squandered on weapons production, which creates relatively few jobs. Educators see schools and universities under-funded, teachers' careers ruined, children lumped into too-large classes, and all but the most utilitarian of studies neglected. Physicists worry about long-term effects of radiation on human beings and the world itself. Retired generals, knowing the sufficient horrors of "conventional warfare," appeal to their governments to call a halt. Charitable

organizations trying to alleviate distress in the third world see foreign aid money, given to produce food, drinking water, medical aid and self-help programs, diverted to bolster up militaristic regimes against their own people. Peace and third-world development are now seen as the two crucial things that must go hand-in-hand to eliminate starvation.

How is the world to break out of this mad vicious circle? Philosophers are beginning to enunciate a new ethic for surviving the nuclear age, in particular a group in California known as the "Beyond War" movement. If things go on as they are, and control remains in the hands of "hawks" and multinational corporation-oriented governments, the death of the human race and of Planet Earth can be realistically predicted. Time is short.



The new ethic (having heard only one speaker on it, and not having seen their literature) is roughly this: In earlier times, cannibalism was accepted. Girl babies were put out to die. Hostages and war captives were killed. Slave labour and the slave trade were considered economic necessities. War as a tool of international relations operated according to sanctioned rules. One by one, these practices have been outlawed, right down to poison gas. But war is still countenanced by some as a method of settling disputes.

There must be no more war. It's time for a global refusal. It's time to reject war as a human way of doing things.

All there is, to oppose the arms build-up, against threats of aggression and deployment of missiles, is humanity, tremendous numbers of flesh-and-blood individuals whose experience will show them the clear, present danger, who will learn in flashes of insight that they must love one another and be their sisters' and

brothers' keepers. When this undeniable groundswell of raised consciences begins welling up around the world, it will bring the war machine to a halt.

This century has seen Christlike acts of courage and self-sacrifice for humanitarian causes, and women in the forefront. Suffragettes laid down their lives for votes for women. During World War II, Vera Britton continued to fight for peace, in spite of being labeled a traitor and having her civil rights curtailed. Resistance fighters like our Dutch, Nelson neighbours Maria and Frans Braal, risked everything to help downed Allied airmen escape the Nazis, and Maria was honoured by the Dutch government for her courage during the War. Had they been caught they could have been summarily executed, leaving seven orphaned children.

A young French woman lay down on the tracks to stop a train carrying the war material bound for Vietnam when France was still the colonial oppressor. At Kent State University, women and men students peacefully protesting the Vietnam War were shot at by the National Guard, and four were killed. Within the last five years, a young Canadian mother, Shelley Douglas, and her minister husband risked jail to protest nuclear-armed submarines at the base at Bangor, Washington, where they threatened the safety of Vancouver, B.C. And today's example is the supreme heroism of the Greenham Common women, who have maintained their peace camp protest for over three years against the deployment of nuclear missiles in England.

People will join hands and transcend themselves. They will find courage they never knew they had. There will be an emotional wave of irresistible, superhuman intensity. They will lay down their bodies to protect the children, and "die gladly!" (to quote a Central American poet.)

I believe this because I cannot and will not think in terms of the death of Humankind.

Viva Flood is a mother of three and grandmother of four. A retired teacher, she works for peace through the Voice of Women, and looks forward to attending the Women's International Peace Conference in Halifax in June.

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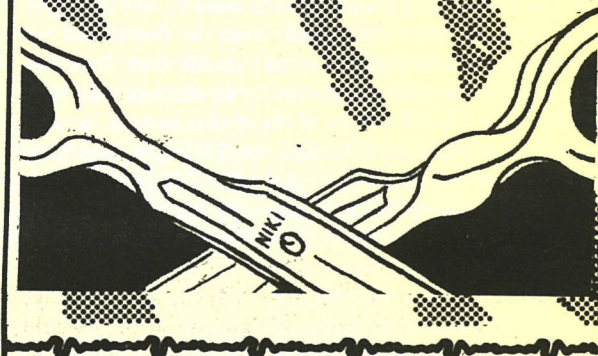


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Welfare mothers

continued from page 9

especially if it has MHR on it, you get really terrified. Fear is the strong thing, fear of losing your kids, of not getting a cheque,...

* Welfare is a trap. They have no realization of getting from subsistence to where you can get off welfare. It takes time and energy to survive on the amount of money you get. In order to work, you have to have more money (childcare, transportation, clothes, food that takes less preparation time, etc.). If you do some work, they just take it off your welfare cheque and you can't afford to work.

* When I see Grace McCarthy's face with that smile I just want to scream and throw rotten eggs. When I first went on welfare I thought, "The Ministry of Human Resources, what a wonderful name! I will be given help through my stress and difficult time and a chance to recover." The difference between their image and the reality is overwhelming.

* Even if you get a job and go off welfare MHR makes sure you stay poor. If you earn minimum wage the child care subsidy is only \$175/month. If you earn anything over \$775/month they start deducting from that subsidy. (see sidebar)

* There is no motivation in their system, only threats and the fear of being cut off.

Television

continued from page 16

"I don't watch it much, only at night, not enough to wear it out."

"Well, I can't sleep with all the noise."

"It's not that loud. But if you want I'll turn it down a bit."

"You'll still wear out my television."

"Well, you don't watch it."

"It's my television set."

"Well what am I supposed to do here at night? Besides I don't think I watch it enough to wear it out!"

The angel scowled. Pah! The angel padded off to her room, dragging her dolls of doom behind her.

Alone in the darkness, alone again, late at night, sitting on the floor watching television, talking to the television, wearing out the television, wearing out the television, wearing out the television. Yes, all right, OK, yes, yes, the death of her television would be on my bloodied hands, alone, on my hands alone. Yes, yes.

Nursing home

You were in there a long time. You stood, your legs straddling the white toilet bowl, wiping, wiping, wiping, your pants stretched tight around your knees, your green and white flecked summer dress hitched up around your waist. You were in there a long time, surrounded by white tiles, white tiles on the floor, white tiles on the walls. I didn't look at the ceiling. And a stainless steel support rail, evidence of body failure and decay, glistened clinical pure and antiseptic in this pagoda of personal privacy where we flush away the toils of our earthly existence. You were in there a long time. I reluctantly invaded, blinds of detachment in my eyes, my heart enamelled. I stared at the triangle of your pubic hair, faded brown, sparse and wispy, pointing to where I was born. You looked up at me, tears in those watery grey eyes, flooding, spilling, spilling out down your cheeks. Oh, Susie, you said and something more but I cannot remember, only that for the first time you confessed your helplessness and your anguish to me, who was already a stranger through time, distance and brain damage. The enamel cracked.

Susie O'Donnell is a Nelson actor and writer.

* In order not to be totally destitute you have to bring in something extra. But the fear of being found out stops you.

Surviving

Refusing to accept a negative self image, being conscious of their worth and contributions to society and being part of a supportive community of friends has allowed some women to survive the welfare period of their lives with less damage than others.

* You have to have confidence in yourself in making this lousy part of the system work for you. If you don't, you can't make it, especially if you believe all the lies they tell you.

* I have gotten much more capable of dealing with MHR. I feel I am a person, not a welfare recipient, and I don't approach them with a base of fear. I have to know inside my head and heart that they haven't got me. You throw a wrench in the works when you are not intimidated by them.

* I learned some things being on welfare, how to manage money, how not to be intimidated by bureaucracy. It gives you a chance by allowing some time to develop independence and organization, things that are usually missed in a woman's life if you have always been dependent on a male.

* I refuse to sit down here and die. Just because I'm poor doesn't mean I can't do anything. My own self esteem, the support from my friends, and the knowledge that the money is mine, give me strength. We poor people have to stop acting so poor.

Sam Simpson is an IMAGES collective member and ex-welfare recipient.

Empanelling

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long periods of time and still ask for support from their families, she said. For a large number of women to run the traditional household role of women must change.

Despite this, Culpepper expects the percentage of women running for MLA to climb in the province without empanelling.

Gerald Rotering acted as assistant to former Kootenay West MP Lyle Kristiansen. Rotering said empanelling is partly necessary because it is intimidating for any one, male or female, to challenge an incumbent.

He called empanelling an "innocuous" procedure, where a minimum of six people are put forward for nomination. The executive does not have to put forward the slate, he said, anybody can put forward a slate or add their names.

Rotering suggested there was a misconception about affirmative action when the equal number of male and female challengers was proposed.

He said the general principle of empanelling would "break down the tradition of reaffirming incumbents" with "incumbents realizing they do not personify the party." Nominees would have to work very hard to maintain their positions, resulting in very healthy dynamics within the party, he said.

Feminists have sometimes been criticized for staying outside the political party system. We are told that if we want a party, particularly the NDP, to be more responsive to feminist concerns we should join and become a part of it. Many feminists have done that or have been members.

But the relationship between feminists and the NDP is still uneasy, even though it has the most progressive platform - or perhaps because it has the most progressive

platform. Besides fringe parties, there are no alternatives. Fears exist that once elected, the party could turn away from its more controversial pro-feminist stand. Skelly told IMAGES that he would see that abortion clinics operated legally in B.C., while the elected NDP government of Manitoba has and still is prosecuting Dr. Henry Morgentaler.

What does the local rejection of empanelling mean? It could mean that any woman who challenged the MLA with the support of the feminist community would be seen as a disrupter of the party, especially if she was not a long-established member, rather than a legitimate challenger. So the question is, if feminists joined the party in order to influence its policy, would we be welcomed or viewed with suspicion?

On the other hand, it is true that women have taken a more active role and that some women within the party may become challengers. But, it must be noted that amid rumours of four to five possible candidates for provincial nomination, including the incumbent Lorne Nicolson, all are men.

Tish Lakes is a regular contributor and a Nelson writer.

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